good reason. In both the 108th and 109th Congresses, we did introduce legislation that would do exactly the same thing as the bill we are considering today with some additions. H.R. 4218 in the 108th Congress and H.R. 28 in the 109th Congress were approved not only overwhelmingly by the Science Committee but by the full House of Representatives.

□ 1415

Unfortunately, because of jurisdictional complications, our friends in the other body across the rotunda had never considered this legislation. It had been endorsed by the President's science adviser, Dr. Marburger, several years ago. It is a real shame that it hasn't moved forward, but we are really happy we are, I think, going to have both sides of the aisle work on it this time.

At the time when we first introduced the High Performance Computing Revitalization Act in April of 2004, a new Japanese supercomputer, the Earth Simulator, was the fastest supercomputer in the world, a title it held for well over 2 years, from June 2002 through November of 2004.

Some experts claimed that Japan was able to produce a computer far ahead of American machines because the U.S. had taken an overly cautious or conventional approach to computing R&D. In hindsight, we see that caution meant lost opportunities.

Granted a lot has changed since November of 2004. The U.S. is now home to not only the world's fastest supercomputer, but seven of the 10 fastest, thanks to the hard work and competitive spirit of people at IBM, Cray and Silicon Graphics, as well as the Department of Energy and NSF.

But we must retain the leadership and development and use of supercomputers. As confirmed by reports of the Council on Competitiveness and the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee, supercomputers are essential to maintaining U.S. leadership in many scientific fields and have many applications, from pharmaceuticals and climate to national and homeland security.

That is why the bill that we are considering today is so important. It is designed to ensure U.S. preeminence and competitiveness in computational science. This bill commits the Federal Government to providing the research community with sustained access to the highest end supercomputers, supporting all aspects of high performance computing, including software development and data management for scientific and engineering applications, and developing and maintaining a road map for computational science in the fields that require it.

I am honored to have worked with the chairman of the Research and Science Education Subcommittee, Mr. BAIRD, on this straightforward, commonsense legislation, and I have good reason to be hopeful that it will pass. As my colleague from Washington has already indicated, we made changes in this bill, simple changes, that would help our colleagues in the other body avoid those jurisdictional problems that they seem to have sometimes that have stymied their consideration of this bill in the past.

In closing, I just want to say that this bill will provide researchers in the United States with the computing resources they need to remain world class. Our Nation's scientific enterprise and our economy will be stronger for it.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1068.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I will just very briefly again commend Mrs. BIGGERT for her leadership on this. She has been steadfast and dogged on this. We hope with the changes we made to this bill, it will meet the approval of the other body. This is not a partisan issue. This is about keeping American science and industry at the very forefront of the world. This bill will help us do that.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1068, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENERGY TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACT

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 85) to provide for the establishment of centers to encourage demonstration and commercial application of advanced energy methods and technologies, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 85

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Energy Technology Transfer Act''.

SEC. 2. ENERGY TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER.

Section 917 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16197) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 917. ADVANCED ENERGY TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTERS.

''(a) GRANTS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the Energy Technology Transfer Act, the Secretary shall make grants to nonprofit institutions, State and local governments, cooperative extension services, or institutions of higher education (or consortia thereof), to establish a geographically dispersed network of Advanced Energy Technology Transfer Centers, to be located in areas the Secretary determines have the greatest need of the services of such Centers. In making awards under this section, the Secretary shall—

''(1) give priority to applicants already operating or partnered with an outreach program capable of transferring knowledge and information about advanced energy efficiency methods and technologies;

''(2) ensure that, to the extent practicable, the program enables the transfer of knowledge and information—

''(A) about a variety of technologies and

''(B) in a variety of geographic areas;

''(3) give preference to applicants that would significantly expand on or fill a gap in existing programs in a geographical region; and

''(4) consider the special needs and opportunities for increased energy efficiency for manufactured and site-built housing, including construction, renovation, and retrofit.

''(b) ACTIVITIES.—Each Center shall operate a program to encourage demonstration and commercial application of advanced energy methods and technologies through education and outreach to building and industrial professionals, and to other individuals and organizations with an interest in efficient energy use. Funds awarded under this section may be used for the following activities:

''(1) Developing and distributing informational materials on technologies that could use energy more efficiently.

''(2) Carrying out demonstrations of advanced energy methods and technologies.

''(3) Developing and conducting seminars, workshops, long-distance learning sessions, and other activities to aid in the dissemination of knowledge and information on technologies that could use energy more efficiently.

''(4) Providing or coordinating onsite energy evaluations, including instruction on the commissioning of building heating and cooling systems, for a wide range of energy end-users.

''(5) Examining the energy efficiency needs of energy end-users to develop recommended research projects for the Department.

''(6) Hiring experts in energy efficient technologies to carry out activities described in paragraphs (1) through (5).

''(c) APPLICATION.—A person seeking a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form and containing such information as the Secretary may require. The Secretary may award a grant under this section to an entity already in existence if the entity is otherwise eligible under this section. The application shall include, at a minimum—

''(1) a description of the applicant's outreach program, and the geographic region it would serve, and of why the program would be capable of transferring knowledge and information about advanced energy technologies that increase efficiency of energy use;

''(2) a description of the activities the applicant would carry out, of the technologies that would be transferred, and of any other organizations that will help facilitate a regional approach to carrying out those activities;

''(3) a description of how the proposed activities would be appropriate to the specific energy needs of the geographic region to be served;

''(4) an estimate of the number and types of energy end-users expected to be reached through such activities; and

''(5) a description of how the applicant will assess the success of the program.

''(d) SELECTION CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall award grants under this section on the basis of the following criteria, at a minimum:

''(1) The ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed activities.

''(2) The extent to which the applicant will coordinate the activities of the Center with other entities as appropriate, such as State and local governments, utilities, institutions of higher education, and National Laboratories.

''(3) The appropriateness of the applicant's outreach program for carrying out the program described in this section.

''(4) The likelihood that proposed activities could be expanded or used as a model for other areas.

''(e) COST-SHARING.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall require cost-sharing in accordance with the requirements of section 988 for commercial application activities.

''(f) DURATION.—

''(1) INITIAL GRANT PERIOD.—A grant awarded under this section shall be for a period of 5 years.

''(2) INITIAL EVALUATION.—Each grantee under this section shall be evaluated during its third year of operation under procedures established by the Secretary to determine if the grantee is accomplishing the purposes of this section described in subsection (a). The Secretary shall terminate any grant that does not receive a positive evaluation. If an evaluation is positive, the Secretary may extend the grant for 3 additional years beyond the original term of the grant.

''(3) ADDITIONAL EXTENSION.—If a grantee receives an extension under paragraph (2), the grantee shall be evaluated again during the second year of the extension. The Secretary shall terminate any grant that does not receive a positive evaluation. If an evaluation is positive, the Secretary may extend the grant for a final additional period of 3 additional years beyond the original extension.

''(4) LIMITATION.—No grantee may receive more than 11 years of support under this section without reapplying for support and competing against all other applicants seeking a grant at that time.

''(g) PROHIBITION.—None of the funds awarded under this section may be used for the construction of facilities.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

''(1) ADVANCED ENERGY METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES.—The term 'advanced energy methods and technologies' means all methods and technologies that promote energy efficiency and conservation, including distributed generation technologies, and life-cycle analysis of energy use.

''(2) CENTER.—The term 'Center' means an Advanced Energy Technology Transfer Center established pursuant to this section.

''(3) DISTRIBUTED GENERATION.—The term 'distributed generation' means an electric power generation technology, including photovoltaic, small wind, and micro-combined heat and power, that serves electric consumers at or near the site of production.

''(4) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION.—The term 'Cooperative Extension' means the extension services established at the land-grant colleges and universities under the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914.

''(5) LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.—The term 'land-grant colleges and universities' means—

''(A) 1862 Institutions (as defined in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601));

''(B) 1890 Institutions (as defined in section 2 of that Act); and

''(C) 1994 Institutions (as defined in section 2 of that Act).

''(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated in section 911, there are authorized to be appropriated for the program under this section such sums as may be appropriated.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 85, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, when we examine market barriers for advanced research energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, we find that a simple lack of public knowledge often keeps those technologies on the laboratory shelf and out of the marketplace. Outreach and education of building and industry professionals and other key decisionmakers will undoubtedly accelerate the deployment of beneficial energy technologies and practices into the larger marketplace.

Through the guidance of Congressman BRAD MILLER, we sought to address these challenges in the energy bill of 2005 by establishing in section 917 a network of Advanced Energy Technology Transfer Centers. These centers would be a partnership between local entities and DOE to showcase advanced energy technologies and simply teach the right people how to utilize them.

Mrs. BIGGERT worked with Mr. MILLER to refine this section of the EPA Act in her bill, H.R. 85, and I believe it is a valuable improvement that will get these centers up and running sooner.

This bill came through the Science Committee and passed the House last year as part of H.R. 6203. It was a good idea then, and Chairman GORDON saw that it should be treated the same in this Congress. Like the other two bills before us today, the Science and Technology Committee passed this bill out of committee with no objection. I again commend my colleague from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for working with the majority on this important bill, and I urge its approval by the House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 85, the Energy Technology Transfer Act, that was introduced by Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT, a most valuable and respected member of the Science Committee and former chairwoman of the Energy Subcommittee. I thank her and Mr. MILLER from North Carolina for their work on this bill.

There is concern that there is not enough assistance or education available in the area of transferring technologies in energy efficiency and distributed clean energy that has been developed by the Department of Energy and the national laboratories to energy end users.

In this time of heightened awareness of how much energy we are using and how much energy costs, how dependent we are on foreign countries for energy feedstocks and how to continue the emissions reductions achieved thus far under various programs, it makes sense to do all we can to make sure that energy end users are as informed as possible about what is available to them to help them become more energy efficient.

H.R. 85 would amend section 917 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which requires the Secretary of Energy to distribute grants to establish a network of advanced energy technology transfer centers for the transfer of advanced energy technologies and methods to a wide range of energy end users, including individuals, businesses and building and industrial professionals.

The bill does not create a new program. It simply improves upon the current section 917 by specifying types of activities that may be funded, minimum criteria and priorities for qualifying applications, duration of funding, and grantee evaluation requirements.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. HALL, for yielding me the time to discuss H.R. 85, the Energy Technology Transfer Act. I would also like to commend my friend and colleague Mr. BAIRD of Washington for managing this bill, and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER) for his hard work on this bill.

The provisions in this bill were included in section 11 of H.R. 6203, the Alternative Energy Research and Development Act, which passed the House by voice vote in September of last year. The Federal Government spends billions every year on energy-related research and development at our universities and national laboratories. The result is often new technologies that reduce our consumption of energy or encourage the use of alternative fuels, and thus reduces our dependence on foreign sources of energy.

But the biggest challenge to realizing these energy savings is getting these technologies out of the laboratory and into the marketplace where they can benefit all energy end users. Whether we are talking about a business owner, a homeowner, or a county or local government official, these energy end users may be hesitant to embrace advanced or alternative energy technologies with which they may not be familiar, have little experience or which may require new infrastructure.

The risk of investing in new energy technologies is just too great compared to conventional energy technologies, and getting information on the latest, greatest energy technologies can just be too costly or time-consuming.

That is why section 917 of EPACT of 2005 directed the Department of Energy to create a geographically dispersed network of energy efficient technology

transfer centers. The purpose of these centers is to transfer and provide education on energy efficiency and distribute clean energy technologies developed by DOE and at the national laboratories to energy end users.

The bill we are considering today, H.R. 85, the Energy Technology Transfer Act, would simply improve section 917 of EPACT. Instead of creating from scratch this network of centers, H.R. 85 would authorize the DOE to provide grants to and partner with existing community outreach networks. These existing networks could include cooperative extension system offices, State energy offices, local governments, institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations with expertise in energy technologies or outreach.

The Cooperative Extension Service and similar community outreach networks have a long and successful history of transferring knowledge about new technologies and techniques to farmers and other constituencies. However, few have the resources to focus on energy efficiency outside of the agriculture center. H.R. 85 would change that and would build on the successful model of the ag extension service without creating any new entity or bureaucracy.

H.R. 85 still demands the same requirements of these centers. They must be geographically dispersed; they must coordinate regional resource engineering and business expertise; and they must help apply energy technologies and methods suitable to local climate. But instead of limiting these centers to the transfer of energy technologies, H.R. 85 would expand their mission to include all advanced energy technologies.

In addition to requiring grant recipients to demonstrate results or risk losing their grant, H.R. 85 would require grantees to provide feedback to DOE on the research needs related to the production, storage or use of energy identified by energy end users. It would also encourage grant recipients to work with utilities to carry out informational activities for energy end users.

H.R. 85 prohibits grant recipients from using grants funding to construct facilities to house the tech transfer center. It doesn't authorize any funding that isn't already authorized in EPACT. In other words, this bill contains no new funding. Instead, it simply gives new guidance and direction to the Secretary about how to bolster the Department's technology transfer capacity.

I just want to give you one example from Chicago about how this program might work and its potential to save energy through the deployment of advanced energy technologies.

Before expanding their frozen pizza production plant in Woodridge, Illinois, Home Run Inn Pizza consulted with the University of Illinois Chicago's Energy Resource Center. After conducting an assessment of the plant and its operations, the UIC Energy Resource Center identified nine ways Home Run Inn Pizza could reduce their energy consumption and energy costs. Using advanced energy technologies developed as a result of DOE's funded research, Home Run Inn Pizza could reduce natural gas consumption by 13 percent and energy consumption by 5 to 6 percent, saving a total of over $15,000 annually.

Because of resource limitations, the UIC Energy Resource Center will help 12 companies in this way in fiscal year 2007, saving each on the average 15 percent of its energy budget and providing a return on investment within 2 years.

With passage of H.R. 85, the UIC Energy Resource Center and other cooperative extension and community outreach organizations could add the capacity and expertise to help many, many more companies, building managers, home builders and homeowners use technology to save energy and money.

I want to conclude by thanking the bill's chief cosponsor, my friend and colleague from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER) for his strong interest in tech transfer and this legislation in particular. As we have worked with the majority to improve this legislation, his input has been invaluable. I also want to thank Chairman GORDON for recognizing the value of this legislation and moving it expeditiously through the committee. I want to thank Ranking Member HALL for his assistance as well.

Finally, I want to thank the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges and a long list of its members for their strong support of this bill. This bill represents just a small investment in the tech transfer capabilities we need to help our universities and labs move advanced energy technologies from the labs into the markets so Americans can enjoy the tangible benefits of our Federal investment in R&D.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

□ 1430

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I just would echo Mrs. BIGGERT's astute comments. We talk a lot in this body and in the administration about the importance of launching new energy research initiatives. The fact is we have a number of efficient technologies before us today, and the real challenge is getting those out to the public to be implemented as soon as possible.

The quickest way to address our energy challenge is not to immediately invent some miracle cure. The quickest way is to implement the existing technologies and mechanisms that we have already before us to begin saving energy today.

I encourage passage of this bill and commend Mrs. BIGGERT for her leadership.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I originally introduced as an amendment to the Energy Bill, what is now section 917 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Then Chairman BOEHLERT accepted that amendment in the 108th, and then made it part of the base bill the next time that it came through this committee in the 109th. H.R. 85 makes improving changes to section 917, to make it an even more effective program.

There has never been a partisan divide over this program. This committee passed the language in this bill as part of a broader energy bill that Mrs. BIGGERT introduced in the last Congress. I thank the Chairman for working to get this bill to the House floor and thank Mrs. BIGGERT for continuing to work with me on the issue of energy technology transfer.

The purpose of the program is to encourage the use in the real world of energy efficiency technologies that have been developed with, often, federally funded research, the Department of Energy, but that has sat unused on the shelf. Using those energy efficiency technologies offers the promise of immediate help with our problems, with our energy needs, our dependency, and we should be using every effort to try to make ourselves more energy independent.

This bill would extend those ways of delivering energy conservation and efficiency programs to include cooperative extension services, which is a definite improvement, and important, that these energy efficiency technologies make their way into rural America.

And I hope that these improvements to Sec 917 of EPACT really do make the program much more comprehensive and will send a message to the Department of Energy and to the appropriators that this program should be funded.

The President's budget request failed to request funding for this program this year. In the 109th Congress the appropriators failed to include funding, despite my best efforts and many efforts to tug at someone's sleeve and get their attention, to try to include it in the appropriations bill. And I hope with a strong bipartisan effort this year, this program can be funded, and we can begin to make sure we get into practical use the energy efficiency technologies that we have developed.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I urge passage of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 85, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

REAUTHORIZING THE STEEL AND ALUMINUM ENERGY CONSERVATION AND TECHNOLOGY COMPETITIVENESS ACT OF 1988

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1126) to reauthorize the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1126

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 9 of the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 5108) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act $12,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012.''.

(b) STEEL PROJECT PRIORITIES.—Section 4(c)(1) of the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 5103(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (H), by striking ''coatings for sheet steels'' and inserting ''sheet and bar steels''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(K) The development of technologies which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988 is further amended—

(1) by striking section 7 (15 U.S.C. 5106); and

(2) in section 8 (15 U.S.C. 5107), by inserting '', beginning with fiscal year 2008,'' after ''close of each fiscal year''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1126, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 1126, legislation reauthorizing the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988, also known as the Metals Initiative.

Today, the steel industry and other metals industry, including aluminum and copper, are important parts of our national economy; and they must remain innovative in order to stay competitive in the increasingly global economy. It is vital to ensure that these industries are fully prepared to confront the challenges they face. This bill will help develop the innovative tools needed to grow valuable American jobs and businesses, and to protect the environment, by tapping into good old-fashioned American ingenuity.

Originally passed by the 100th Congress, the Metals Initiative authorizes Federal cost-sharing of research whose goals are threefold: first, enhancing energy efficiency; second, increasing the competitiveness of American industries; and, third, improving the environment through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

More specifically, this legislation promotes collaborative, public-private cost-shared research between American industry, the Department of Energy, and institutions of higher education. The bill would reauthorize the Metals Initiative at $12 million per year for fiscal year 2008 through fiscal year 2012 to fund advanced metals research.

The success of the American steel industry has a special personal significance to me. My father-in-law was a steelworker at Bethlehem Steel in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, until he lost his job when his plant closed due to foreign competition. This bill will help prevent further loss of good American jobs like his by using American innovation to increase the competitiveness of our domestic industry.

While American industries have significantly modernized, the pace of technology and the competition from overseas is relentless. Reauthorization of this bill is essential to grow American jobs, keep the customers of metal industries strong, and ensure that we have a domestic supply of the materials we need for our national defense.

The results of this program speak for themselves. Since its inception, the Metals Initiative has delivered numerous technologies to the factory floor, resulting in incredible environmental and energy savings while increasing the competitive position of the steel industry and the domestic manufacturing sector.

In the Chicago area, schools such as my alma mater Northwestern University have participated in this program, as well as companies such as IPSCO. Because of the advances made in steel production, partially through the industry's partnership with DOE, the steel industry as a whole used 28 percent less energy per ton in 2004 than it did in 1990.

In addition, this research has produced several successful and important technological breakthroughs, including the development of advanced high-strength steels and ultra-lightweight steel automobile bodies, meaning lighter, safer and more energy-efficient cars.

Recently, these advanced technologies were applied to a new, lightweight military vehicle, yielding performance improvements including 25 percent weight savings and 50 percent fuel efficiency improvements. Through this partnership program, the U.S. Army now has a next generation tactical vehicle that is agile and responsive. These advances, applied to the civilian versions of the vehicle, add a substantial further positive impact to our Nation's economy.

It is also important to note that the Federal funds in this program are given to the schools to conduct the research. Companies are not the recipients of funds, and they must provide a share of the cost of the research. But the American company that provides that match has the first opportunity to take advantage of the research findings and improve their manufacturing operations, benefiting American workers.

H.R. 1126 is simply a great example of how public-private partnership can benefit American workers and taxpayers, while saving energy, improving the environment, and accelerating the development and implementation of modern technology.

All Americans can benefit from commonsense programs such as this one, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1126.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1126, a bill to reauthorize the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988. This legislation has been passed unanimously by this body for the past two Congresses, and I hope it will do so again today.

The Department of Energy's steel-related energy-efficiency research and development program was first established in 1986 and was expanded to a broader ''metals initiative'' in 1988 when the President signed into law the Steel and Aluminum Energy Conservation and Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988.

Reauthorization of appropriations for the program occurred in 1992 with the passage of the Energy Policy Act, but expired in 1997. The steel industry and the Department of Energy continued the partnership under the Metals Initiative and its predecessor, the Steel Initiative, after the authorization expired. This bill would reauthorize the important program through 2012 and expand it slightly by adding research on technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The metals industry is one of the most energy-intensive industries, with energy accounting for a major portion of the cost of production. Improving energy efficiency for this industry will help to reduce the cost of steel and keep American steelmakers competitive in the world market. Improving efficiency will also help with our country's goal to become energy independent and environmentally responsible.

Investment made at the government level in partnership with industry to stimulate achievement of this increased energy efficiency has shown great results. Over the years, 58 steel